

deliver such sound wisdom to his flock from the pulpit as can come only from a sound mind supported by a vigorous and untired body.

"The marvel is that they meet the situation with such unvarying success.

"Of later years, churches have begun to realize the peculiar intensity of the demands upon their ministers, and to introduce here and there the salutary vacation idea. In Atlanta many of the wealthier congregations have adopted the annual leave of absence as a regular feature, insisting that their preachers spend several weeks of each year in rest or differing pursuits, and supplying them with the wherewithal minus which a vacation would be an impossibility.

"The practice should be made so universal as to constitute the rule rather than the exception. From the sheer standpoint of self-interest, the congregation that makes sacrifices to send its preacher into a new environment reaps immeasurable dividends in pleasure and spiritual profit.

"The effective preacher of today is he whose intellectual horizon is kept broad and world-embracing and wholesome. Nothing so conduces to a maintenance of this condition as contact at regular intervals with other peoples and things, and access to new ideas and angles of life. Such a preacher, his physical energies recruited to concert pitch, returns to his congregation brimming with inspiration, better qualified mentally and physically and spiritually to aid his parishioners in confronting the eternal problems of 'the world, the flesh and the devil.'

"Of course, the less well-to-do churches of the smaller towns could not afford to be as liberal as their wealthier neighbors, but there is no reason why, with the observance of economy, they could not effect an approximate policy."

THE MEN IN THE PEWS.

It has been observed that the hymns sung in the pews have kept the people sound in faith after the pulpit has become corrupt. When serious, practical business men speak on religious themes, we almost uniformly find them sound in faith and intolerant toward the skeptical isms that are being obtruded upon public attention from certain professional chairs, semi-religious periodicals and metropolitan pulpits. Those who attend important religious conventions, assemblies, conferences or associations, may observe that when the unprofessional layman is heard from he affirms a devout faith in the God of the Bible and implicit confidence in the authority of his Word, and avows unfaltering belief in the familiar doctrines of evangelical religion, and if there is occasion to take a stand on modern criticism he does it in such a direct, common-sense, positive way as to admit of no doubt that he has settled convictions, and that they accord with the accepted faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

To assert that this is due to his being unskilled in interpretation is begging the question, for if these men are blunderers, why do they not blunder on the side of skepticism as readily as on the side of faith? If the Bible is allowed as a witness on this point, "the unlearned and unstable wrest the Scriptures unto their own destruction." These men sustain and defend the

Scriptures in their literal, plenary meaning. The tendency of the natural heart is toward unbelief, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," but here we have a class of men, the most intelligent and discriminating in the affairs of practical life, holding unhesitating allegiance to the authority of the inspired Word. This can not be the fruit of depraved human nature, nor of being "unlearned and unstable," the Scriptures themselves being judge.

The obvious and adequate explanation is that the men in the pews are trained to weigh evidence in the scale of genuine merit. They accept our Lord's dictum, endorsed by the wisest world-policy, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." With their clear vision and straightforward look, they see the great outstanding evidences and demonstrations that the Bible is God's book, and with the hearts of honest men, willing to see and weigh facts and accept conclusions which these facts warrant and require, these men render to the sacred volume a whole-hearted confidence and allegiance. While a fledgling professor is preparing his dissertation to show that some custom or incident of Bible history is an anachronism, the practical man of affairs, accustomed to weighing evidence on its merits, discerns the thought and method of God in the sacred pages and with immovable conviction says, "I know whom I have believed."

The difference between the two is that the practical man is a searcher after truth that he may know it and use it in building his own character and the character and happiness of others, while the "specialist" is prying into the chronology, or ethnology, or etymology of the Scriptures with the hope of discovering "some new thing" that will give him notoriety. The result is that out of his own speculative fancy he evolves a formidable rubbish heap that, he would fain have the public believe, has intrinsic value. The business man is seeking nutriment for the soul, and structural material for strong character and enduring happiness, while the adventurer in Biblical criticism is seeking recognition as an explorer, or as the latest sensation in Biblical criticism, experience having shown that such novelists can sell their books and can frequently get well-endowed chairs in rich universities.

The time is approaching when a halt will be called in reckless trifling with truth, and it will be the layman who will give the command. He will cease to be tolerant and will withdraw his patronage. He will demand a show of hands and a classification of religionists, and that the sheep shall be divided from the goats. He will even serve notice on the universities that their high walls shall not defend nor their endowments furnish aid and comfort to, enemies of the truth. To such notification there will be deferential response, and with its demands there will be genuine and thorough, though perhaps reluctant, compliance. Hasten the day when the bone and sinew of society, the manhood of the church shall assert its authority and assume its rightful position in maintaining truth and confirming the faith of the people.

"The Westminster" wisely says: "True liberality, especially in religious matters, is giving to another what was always his."